

WOMAN OF FASHION

Wears Real Gowns Now Instead of Make-Believe Ones.

EARLY DRESSES OF THE YEAR

The Shading Costume—Rat's Head and Pussy Cat's Tail—Dreams of Feminine Loveliness.

Have you ever seen a real live rat, you poor little woman who shivers and shudders at the thought of one, and who goes into a spasm at the sight of a mouse? Probably you never have because rats are kept from you more than even the snakes and other crawling and disgusting representatives of the animal kingdom. Those you sometimes see in the circus or at the Zoo or in a menagerie, but rat—save the mark—its name is a source of terror.

Yet—now don't shudder—in your pretty winter wardrobe you may find several rat's heads doing duty as ornaments.

The idea is not a pretty one, but it is nevertheless one that is really in accordance with fact. When the fashion came in at the beginning of this year for the wearing of heads, heads had to be found.

The idea is horrible! Simply horrible! Isn't it? But then there are ever so many horrible things which become less so after one gets accustomed to hearing about them. So the dear little head which is on your muff and the half dozen heads which are upon the front of your coat and the head which is on your box, and the several heads which are upon your hat probably, all came off real live rats.

The next problem was to get enough tails to ornament winter clothes. There seemed to be too few tail-bearing animals in existence to supply the great demand for these appendages. Then somebody else with a great deal of inventive genius espied Miss Tabby sitting by the fire, and thought what a charming thing it would be to get her tail for an ornament to a nice little hood or a jacket, or a muff, or any of the things which seem to demand tails. Accordingly with this idea in mind the people who have charge of the making of women's clothes entered into a contract with certain other people who were willing to undertake the work of obtaining one million cats' tails.

This sounds like a fairy story, but out west, in a certain town in Wisconsin, there is a large firm doing business on a large scale, and the principal article of their trade is the cat's tail. So tabby



AN IDEAL DRESS.

and then are deprived of their ornament and you are wearing it instead.

The principal feature of the skater's dress this year is that it must seem to be all ablow and all afloat in the breeze. Around her neck she wears a huge bow tied with long flowing ends, one of which she has behind her and the other is permitted to fall down and under one of her fur-trimmed arms. All around the skater's dress there is a multiplicity of tails—let us not say cat tails—and her muff is also decorated with them.

Her hat is a mass of plumes and her hair is dressed in the prevailing fashion, which calls for a great number of little curls and twists and curves. The skater's dress is the only gown of the season which cannot be built in conformity with the right tie-back, which is a la mode. It is impossible to make it this way because the skater must have freedom of limb, and the tie-back does not permit that. The skater's dress must be very full all the way round, and it cannot drag in the back. The best length is just below the ankles, and it should be of the same length all the way round.

To compensate for the sad lack of style which the skater's dress must naturally have, the fair skater may allow herself a great deal of prettiness and a great deal of latitude in the trimming of the bottom of the skirt.

It is not the style you know to wear petticoats; instead of that frills are placed around the inside of the dress skirt in such a way that a petticoat effect is produced without any of the petticoat's bulkiness. Now the skater, who, by the way, is generally a wicked little cheat and a snare and a delusion, wants to make herself as bewitching as possible about the feet, and so she dresses the bottom of her skirt with a tiny silk frill to match her dress, and just inside of the dress frill she fits a white lace one. The white lace is quite as long as the dress skirt, and the first free stroke of the skater sends the skirt out upon the breeze, letting the frill get in its fine work to bring havoc to the minds of masculine observers.

The toboggan suit is a pretty one, but the skater's is more graceful by far.

Women must look slim—they really must. Everything possible is done to produce this appearance. Not every woman who is stout has the hardihood to do it. She prefers to be a little plumper than the fashionable law allows rather than deprive herself of that which is indeed meat and drink to her.

When the fair Lillian Russell found that she was becoming less agreeable than she desired, she took a right course of abstinence, but it was too wearing for anyone as petted and pampered as the lovely Lillian, and she soon changed her mind about this course of treatment and went to work trying to dress in a slimmer fashion.

Now, you know everything is in one's appearance. Things are seldom what they seem. Indeed things are never what they seem. It is all an optical

delusion. If you do not believe this get a glimpse of yourself in a convex mirror and then look at yourself directly afterwards in a concave mirror and see if you do not lose all faith in the actuality and the reality of things.

But to return to the lovely Russell. Taking her modesty into her confidence and consulting the best artist of her acquaintance she found that the slim pointed basques made her look a great deal larger, and she also found that any kind of trimming round the waist line



LILLIAN'S SLIM GOWN.

made that same waist line much greater than it really was. Accordingly she gave up basques and she gave up waist trimmings and she likewise gave up folds and cross bands and passementeries and cords and everything that produced a round-and-round effect.

Next she ordered a gown made which should be on straight lines and yet not at all a mother Hubbard; no loose flowing unbelted horror did she want, but an actual gown with a conventional waist, and yet the whole thing so that it should run from neck to feet.

And this is what the modiste achieved. The modiste drew a design for it first and then faithfully followed out the directions. There is a Nagpore silk vest of yellow silk and the collar is done in the conventional Greek pattern of black braid upon a groundwork of yellow. The gown itself is made of llama wool and the trimming is done in hand embroidery. The gown is of black and the vest only is of yellow. The folds run lengthwise and the fullness is brought under the arms and is wrapped around the waist. The effect is extremely pretty, and is so graceful that Lillian is going to have it copied for a stage dress in her next play.

A very pretty gown was recently turned out for a dinner given by a well-known club in New York. The invitations read "for ladies dress informal," and that meant that the dress was to be neither very décolleté nor yet strictly a walking dress. It is not an altogether easy thing to make a gown that fulfills all these requirements. It must be full dress, yet not full dress. It must be a dressy looking affair, and yet be quite informal in its appearance.

The pretty gown that was produced for this occasion fulfilled all these ideas. The waist was of a lovely kind of lace net with large figured lozenges on it of gold and silver tinsel. It was cut pointed front and back, the point extending but very little below the shoulders. The sleeves were of a net and terminated at the elbow, a large slit in the net revealing the fair skin of the wearer. Gloves of wide suede stitched with silver met the sleeves above the elbow, and the neck of the gown was caught front and back with a large gold clasp. There was nothing suggestive of the décolleté in the dress, and yet it was most dressy and pretty. The skirt was a demit-train and around the hem there was a broad band of black velvet tied at the side in a very large bow. The corsage was finished by a very deep black girle with black passementerie around the upper edge, and at the front there was a huge black velvet bow. There was also a



SKATING COSTUME.

bow at the back of the corsage, and the ends hung down to the foot of the train.

The passion for bows seems to have spread about as far as it possibly can. Every well-dressed woman has half a dozen of them somewhere upon her gown, and she even adds a bow to the side of her hair and bands her corsage with strips of ribbon. Very large bows are used for decorating a gown here and there, and one need not be afraid of getting on too many of these ornaments.

What She Wanted.

Wife—I don't think I shall get a new bonnet this month, but I shall have my old one trimmed over.

Husband—Bless you, my dear.

Wife—Don't bless me. Give me two or three dollars for trimming—Clark Review.

Exchange of Courtesies.

"Excuse my humbleness," said the penit to the sheet of paper.

"I could if you were not so penitless," retorted the sheet.—Chicago Tribune.

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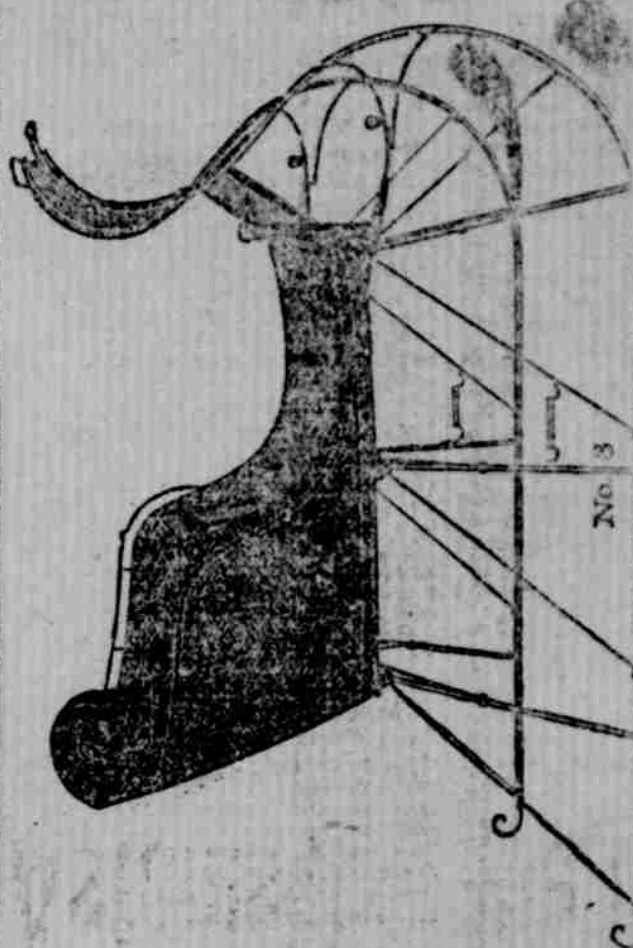


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